

Thursday, 7 March 2024

Vinality International Academy Celebrate 12 New Italian Wine Ambassadors certified at its New York edition

Vinality International Academy, the renowned Italian wine education institute, hosted the 28th edition of its rigorous Italian Wine Ambassador certification course on 4-6 March 2024 at Banville Wine Merchants in New York, certifying 12 new Ambassadors.

The Course

2024 marked the comeback of Vinality International Academy in the United States. A total of 27 students attended the Italian Wine Ambassador certification course, expertly curated by VIA Faculty Sarah Heller MW, at Banville Wine Merchants in New York City. Students participated in three days of instruction, tasting 38 Italian wines from every wine region in Italy before sitting a challenging two and a half hour exam. 12 students who successfully completed the exam were officially certified as Italian Wine Ambassadors.



Candidates of the Vinality International Academy Course 2024, held in New York

Hue Society collaboration

This year's New York edition also involved an exciting new collaboration with the Hue Society, **with the inclusion of two fee-waiver candidates for Hue Society members.** This partnership underlines VIA's commitment to open the door to candidates from marginalized communities who want to enter the wine sector as professionals. Stevie Kim, Managing Partner of Vinality, commented: *"VIA has been a diverse international community from the start and an important part of our ethos is to achieve more*



inclusivity within the wine industry. Partnering with the Hue Society gives us the opportunity to reach and support those communities who want to join the world of wine despite the seemingly insurmountable obstacles that sometimes exist.”

Tenuta Sette Ponti joins as Educational Supporter

In the New York edition of the Vinitaly International Academy course, Tenuta Sette Ponti proudly acted as the official Educational Supporter. During the pinning ceremony held on March 6th, Tenuta Sette Ponti awarded the "Oreno" prize to the outstanding student on the course. This prestigious award, accompanied by an Oreno Jeroboam, was presented to Mihai Popescu by Alberto and Amedeo Moretti Cuseri. Federico Bricolo, President of Veronafiore, and Sales&Marketing Director Raul Barbieri were also on hand to welcome the new Italian Wine Ambassadors to their new role representing and promoting Italian wine on the international market.

The VIA Community

The Vinitaly International Academy certification course is recognised as **the gold standard of Italian wine education**. The VIA community comprises over 1300 candidates, of whom 358 have now achieved the title Italian Wine Ambassador and 16 of those are qualified as Italian Wine Experts. The VIA Community, composed of all students who have studied the program since its inception in 2017, welcomes wine professionals and wine enthusiasts from all over the world, forming a supportive and professional network that extends far beyond the limits of the classroom and includes lasting friendships, an open forum for sharing wine information, and career opportunities. Members continue to participate throughout the year in events such as academic field trips across Italy, gathering in Verona to judge at 5StarWines and Wine Without Walls, attending OperaWine and wine2wine Business Forum, and continually increasing their knowledge and growing their connections across the wine sector.

As part of the VIA Community, Candidates of the VIA New York course also had the opportunity to attend the Vinitaly USA Roadshow - the walk-around tasting event organized by Vinitaly that took place on **March 7th** at the **Fifth Avenue Hotel** in New York.

We are happy to officially announce the new Italian Wine Ambassadors are:

- Brittany Tangora
- Mauricio Peccinini de Chiaro
- Mihai Popescu
- Melissa Graeff
- Marco Albanese
- Matthew Rossiter
- Xin Feng
- Paul Hardy
- Alice Barera
- Alex Banville
- Stacey O'Donal
- Stephanie Johnson

Upcoming VIA Italian Wine Ambassador Courses

The-flagship course of Vinitaly International Academy will be held in Verona on 4-8 April 2024 in the days leading up to Vinitaly International Wine and Spirits Exhibition and will involve the participation of 60+ candidates and the support of nine **top producer organizations**. Satellite courses in other locations around the world will be announced later in the year through VIA social media and the VIA website.



About: [Vinitaly International Academy](#) (VIA) aims to be the gold standard of Italian wine education. It offers a complete educational path with standardized courses that will teach professionals and educators to master the diversity of Italian wine in a rigorous, organized manner. VIA's main objective is to foster a global network of highly qualified professionals such as Italian Wine Ambassadors and Italian Wine Experts: in turn, they will support and promote Italian wine throughout the world. VIA was founded by Stevie Kim, Managing Partner of Vinitaly. The new VIA ecosystem avails of the guidance of Italian trade associations Federdoc, Federvini, Vignaioli Indipendenti FIVI, and Unione Italiana Vini as members of the Institutional Advisory Board. Italian vine genetics scholar, Prof. Attilio Scienza, oversees VIA's scientific and educational direction as the Chief Scientist. VIA Faculty Sarah Heller MW and Henry Davar teach the flagship Italian Wine Ambassador course. To date, there are 358 Certified Italian Wine Ambassadors of which 16 are also Italian Wine Experts.